

Noble Sacrifice

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Summary: What if Cloud would have had some sort of warning that Sephiroth was falling from above...? What measures would he take to insure Aeris' safety?

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><br> "Aries..."

><br> Cloud Strife drew his massive Buster Sword from his back. He slowly walked towards Aries Gainsborough. Her hands where together, locked in prayer.

><br> 'At last, I have found you my Holy Angel.' Cloud thought to himself. He steeped closer to the praying Ancient, gripping the sword handle tighter.

><br> 'I wanted to see you, but you left us. I was sad.' Cloud raised the sword above his head as sweat poured down his brow.

><br> 'I wanted to tell you how I felt. I wanted to tell you that I didn't want you to leave. I wanted to forget about Sephiroth. I wanted to be with you. I don't care what Sephiroth does to the planet. I just want to be with you... I... Ever since I saw you ion the streets of Midgar, I always thought that we would be destined for something grand. Your very presence made me feel very good. Your emerald eyes, your long, elegant hair, and your smile...'><br>

Cloud closed his eyes and swallowed.

><br> 'Sorry, Aries. Good-bye.' Cloud prepared to bring the massive blade upon Aries' head.

> "CLOUD WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?!?" Tifa's voice snapped Cloud out of his trance. Cloud lowered his sword and shook his head.<br>

> "What is he making me do...?" Cloud moaned as he stepped back. <br>

> "Cloud...?" Cloud looked up and smiled. Aries had opened her eyes, and she was smiling, too. Their eyes meet, and once again, Cloud felt complete. <br>

> "Aries... I..." Cloud slowly reached his hand towards Aries. <br>

> "Cloud... Why did--"<br>

> "CLOUD!!!!" Cloud tore his gaze from Aries to look at his companions. Vincent was pointing his pistol to the sky. Cloud looked up and gasped<br>> "No..." It was him. Sephiroth. He was falling towards the alter, Masamune in hand. And it was pointed towards Aries... Cloud tossed his Buster Sword aside and ran at the Ancient. He pushed her out of the way just as Sephiroth hit ground. Aries groaned as she slowly made her way to her feet. When she saw Cloud, she gasped. A tear slowly slid down the side of her cheek. Sephiroth's sword was embedded in Cloud's chest with blood flowing from his wound. He desperately gasped for air as he tried to remove the Masamune. His attempts were futile. Sephiroth laughed as he twisted the blade several times, ripping muscles and tendons.<br>> "So this puppet has a soul. No matter. The Cetra girl will join you in due time." Sephiroth removed the blade from the slain SOLIDER and flew off. Cloud fell backwards and hit the floor. Aries kneeled next to Cloud, her eyes flooding with tears. As soon as she saw the wound, she gasped. The wound was too big. nothing was going to stop the inevitable.<br>> Cloud was going to die.<br>> Aries untied her pink hair ribbon, paying no heed to the White Materia which had fallen from it and bounced to the water, where it sank to the bottom. She tried to tie the ribbon around Cloud's wound, but the ribbon was too small.<br>> "Cloud, you fool! Why did you do that!?! WHY!?" Cloud slowly leaned his head forward, caressing Aries' long hair.<br>> "Because I..." The last of strength left Cloud's body and he fell back. His head hit the hard floor with a sickening thud. <br>> "Love you..." Aries muttered. She started to shake Cloud, shouting his name. This wasn't happening. This isn't the way things were supposed to work out...! Aries reached into her pocket and grabbed a Phoenix Down. Aries used it, but to no avail. Cloud still lied there, broken.<br>> "Damnit! What can't you ever work!?" She broke down in tears and started to cry uncontrollably. <br>> "I loved you, too!" Suddenly Tifa reached the alter. She broke down as soon as she saw Cloud's fallen body. Tifa went over to Aries and the both of them embraced in a hug. Aries tied her ribbon around his neck.<br>> "Don't worry, Cloud. The evils of the world can't harm you now... Just, remember me."<br>

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